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Message Text

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45
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SSC-01 IO-11 OMB-01 AID-05 SAM-01 /084 W
---------- 060283
P 121401Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7886
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0038

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MA
SUBJ: RAKOTOMALALA APPOINTED NEW PRIME MINISTER

1. JOEL RAKOTOMALALA, 47, ARMY OFFICER AND MEMBER OF SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (CSR), WAS APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER BY PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA ON JAN. 11. CONCURRENTLY WITH HIS APPOINTMENT, HE WAS ALSO PROMOTED TO RANK OF FULL COLONEL. RAKOTOMALALA SERVED AS MINISTER OF INFORMATION IN RAMANANTSOA GOVT OF MAY 1972 - JAN. 1975. HE WAS THE ONLY MEMBER OF RAMANANTSOA GOVT TO HOLD MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO (POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS) UNDER RATSIMANDRAVA/ANDRIAMAHAZO GOVT OF FEB. - JUNE 1975.

2. A MEMBER OF THE BETSILEO TRIBE AND ONLY BETSILEO ON CSR, RAKOTOMALALA BECAME INCREASINGLY PROMINENT DURING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN PRIOR TO DEC. 21 REFERENDUM. HE APPEARED FREQUENTLY WITH RATSIRAKA OR ON LATTER'S BEHALF. NOT A MAN OF STRONG INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY, HE APPEARS TO BEND WITH CURRENT POLITICAL WINDS WHICH PROBABLY ACCOUNTS FOR HIS SURVIVABILITY. HE IS REPORTEDLY WELL-LIKED AND FRIENDLY. HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY
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TOWARD AMERICANS DURING RECENT YEARS AND REACTED FAVORABLY TO

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THE VIEW OF THE US THAT HE RECEIVED AS A LEADER GRANTEE IN
MAY 1974.

3. RAKOTOMALALA HAS NO PERSONAL FOLLOWING, IS NOT AN INNOVATOR, AND IS NOT OBVIOUSLY AMBITIOUS. AS PRIME MINISTER, HE IS NOT LIKELY TO POSE A THREAT TO RATSIRAKA AS HE ACQUIRES INCREASED PROMINENCE OR TO MAKE A STRONG CONTRIBUTION WHEN IT COMES TO GDRM POLICIES. CLEARLY, THE ROLE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AS DEFINED BY THE NEW CONSTITUTION IS THAT OF AN IMPLEMENTATOR RATHER THAN A POLICY-MAKER. YET, THE PRIME MINISTER WILL HAVE THE MOST FREQUENT ACCESS TO RATSIRAKA AND COULD THEREFORE SERVE AS AN IMPORTANT ADVISOR IF HE HAD A MIND TO. HOWEVER, RAKOTOMALALA IS KNOWN TO BE LOYAL TO HIS SUPERIORS AND GENERALLY HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO DO RATSIRAKA'S BIDDING. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT AS MINISTER OF INFORMATION HE WAS MODERATE IN HANDLING THAT SENSITIVE POST DURING A PERIOD WHEN POLITICAL WINDS IN MADAGASCAR WERE GENTLY SHIFTING FROM WESTERLY TO EASTERLY.

4. IN ADDITION TO HIS US VISIT, RAKOTOMALA VISITED MOSCOW IN 1974 AT WHICH TIME HE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASS AGENCY IN TANANARIVE. HE VISITED PEKING IN JULY 1975 AND SIGNED, ON BEHALF OF THE GDRM, A $62 MILLION AID AGREEMENT WITH CHINA. HE ALSO ACTED AS FOREIGN MINISTER DURING THE RAMANANTSOA GOVT WHEN THE THEN-FOREIGN MINISTER RATSIRAKA WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

5. HE ATTENDED VARIOUS MILITARY SCHOOLS IN FRANCE:
OFFICER'S SCHOOL FOR NATIONALS OF OVERSEAS TERRORITIES
1957-1959, INFANTRY APPLICATION SCHOOL AT SAINT-MAXIENT
1959-1960, AND SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS APPLICATION IN MONTARGIA
1960-1961. HIS ARMY SPECIALTY WAS MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS.
SHEINBAUM

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